

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

AIDE MEMOIRE FOR DISCUSSION WITH UNITED STATES CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS BY MANGOSUTHU G. BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU, PRESIDENT OF INKATHA AND CHAIRMAN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 1985

Meaningful political dialogue is notoriously difficult to pursue, even in the most propitious of circumstances. Even where there are common objectives and there is a traditionally defined system of social, political and economic values, political groups can be at loggerheads and experience grave difficulties in discussing things meaningfully and rationally. One has only to listen to parliamentary debates in Western democracies to take the point that I am making. As soon as vested interests are associated with power struggles, situations are represented and misrepresented and it becomes extremely difficult to have meaningful conversation.

A FEW REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF A MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL BY MANGOSUTHU G. BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU, PRESIDENT OF INKATHA AND CHAIRMAN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE. 5TH FEBRUARY 1985, MAYFLOWER HOTEL, WASHINGTON

Big business in the United States is faced with a political debate about what it should do and should not do. The rising tide of American interest in South Africa and public indignation against apartheid is being raised to the point where we can anticipate a spate of congressional activity. Those opposed to President Reagan will use his policy of constructive engagement towards South Africa as a stick with which to beat him, and it is inevitable that in these circumstances, those jockeying for positions of power and influence will take every opportunity available to use the South African lobby as an in-pot to their activities and their

American dialogue

Influential Americans including Senators, Congressmen and the chief executive officers of large corporations heard Chief Buthelezi explain during his recent visit to the US that the crucial question now was whether or not big companies could play a positive role in the process of helping to bring about change in South Africa.

He told them: "I am watching with some interest how American companies will in fact respond to the current situation. If big business has a job of work to do in South Africa beyond the turning over of dollars; if America as the world's leading industrial nation, and the world's leading democratic country, uses big business as a party political tool, and if activists and lobbyists in the United States beat big business in the field of public relations and mount the kind of pressures on big business which forces their hand in South Africa, then we will be witnessing something we have not yet witnessed before."

In the past big business interests in the West had participated in the development of the South African economy and had done so within the framework of apartheid. They had been party to the fact that economic development had favoured Whites at the expense of Blacks. There was now no doubt that the West generally and big business in particular were — in the last generation — blind to the horrors of apartheid. This was not the case now and American businessmen had "seen the writing on the wall ..."

America, he said, had the kind of massive wealth which afforded it the luxury of being involved in South Africa or not being involved. Big business in America was aware of that power and one of its options was to withdraw now in the certain knowledge, and perhaps even capitalist arrogant knowledge, that they were not foregoing involvement in the development of South and Southern Africa forever.

He said Congressmen and Senators in particular would be receiving conflicting signals from Black South Africa... Black South Africans had the right to differ with each other and to pursue differing aims and objectives. However, as a democrat he believed that the final arbiter of who was "acceptable" and who was not acceptable, were the masses of ordinary Black people. No other organisation in the country was endorsed by ordinary people as effectively as Inkatha was endorsed. For that reason he asked that his observations be taken seriously.

Chief Buthelezi asked Americans to "employ their indignation skillfully and rationally" and to bear the following nine points in mind:

1. The practice of democracy is deeply and adversely affected by circumstances of mass poverty. I ask Americans to remember that Black South Africans do not wish to destroy the foundations of future progress by indulging in the politics of anger which is satisfying in the short term but detrimental in the medium and long term.
2. The majority of Black South Africans seek to bring about fundamental changes in South Africa through the politics of negotiation, and by employing non-violent means.
3. Ordinary Black South Africans see politics as a bread and butter thing and as a vehicle for improvements in their standard of living and in individual family circumstances.
4. Black South Africans are intimately aware of White power and that it will be used to protect Whites preferentially if South Africa began to feel the effects of economic isolation.
5. Ordinary Blacks do not distinguish between those among them who were forced to live in urban ghettos by apartheid and those whom the same apartheid forces to live in rural areas. For them, the rural/urban dichotomy does not exist as a political dimension, and for them life under apartheid rule is as obnoxious for Blacks in apartheid-created townships, or apartheid-created so-called homelands.
6. Black South Africans do not wish to pay terrible prices for failing strategies and they neither believe that the armed struggle, nor the effective economic isolation of South Africa, could succeed in destroying apartheid for the foreseeable future. Both the armed struggle and increased economic deprivation, which Blacks would experience as the result of effective economic sanctions against the country as a whole, would involve Blacks in paying heavy prices for gains which would be minimal if there be any gains at all.
7. Black strategists with their feet on the ground are aware that people who suffer as we suffer, experience losses of morale in the face of the prospects of greatly increased suffering. It is the taste of something better which galvanises impoverished people to demand more and which creates a sustained determination to struggle for that more.
8. Righteous indignation which vents itself against South Africa's White apartheid bosses but which also extolls casualties from Blacks, must be rejected, as the use of bombs against strategic and military targets in South Africa which kill and maim ordinary Black citizens in the process, must be rejected.
9. Americans must always remember that the international might of the United States should not be used to dictate to Black South Africans about what they should do and what they should not do, and what they should suffer and should not suffer, as Americans give vent to anger and indignation against the horrors of apartheid.